CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDREDTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 March 2002, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Markku Reimaa (Finland)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 900th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I would like warmly to welcome our two distinguished speakers today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Sattar, and the Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Javad Zarif, who will address the Conference. Their presence among us today demonstrates the enduring commitment of their Governments to our common endeavours and the continued importance that they attach to the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced that their addresses will be followed by us all with great interest.

Allow me also to welcome to our meeting a group of Japanese diplomats dealing with disarmament issues, who have gathered in Geneva from a number of embassies and missions abroad in order to familiarize themselves with various aspects of arms control and disarmament, as well as with the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have also on my list for today the following speakers in addition to the eminent representatives that I have already mentioned: Ambassador Leonid Skotnikov of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Hu Xiaodi of China, Ambassador Les Luck of Australia, and Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru of Japan.

I have the pleasure to give the floor now to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Sattar.

Mr. SATTAR (Pakistan): Your Excellencies, Mr. President, distinguished members of the Conference, I start with an apology regarding my sound box - but I am sure that those who will be listening to me through interpreters will gain a much better idea of what I am saying than those who are following me in English, because of my throat.

It is a distinct honour for me to address the Conference on Disarmament for the first tim[illegible] in my present position and to share with you Pakistan's perspectives on global and regional security issues.

Pakistan is confident that, under you, Mr. President, the Conference on Disarmament will make significant strides towards fulfilling its important role. Given our commitment to disarmament objectives, and the excellent relations between Pakistan and Finland, you can count on Pakistan's full support and cooperation in your endeavours.

I also congratulate Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze on his appointment as the Secretary-General of the Conference. His vast diplomatic experience will be a great asset in facilitating the work of this forum.

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

The global security environment has been transformed over the last year. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 threw into bold relief the new dimensions of international insecurity and instability. They demonstrated that threats to security can emanate from diverse sources, internal and external; that even the most powerful States are vulnerable; and that the causes of such threats are complex, as are their consequences.

The magnitude of the tragedy galvanized the world community to intensify cooperation in order to strengthen peace and security. It brought together an international coalition to fight terrorism. It has created the possibility of finally bringing peace and reconstruction to Afghanistan. The world community is now engaged in a more earnest analysis of the root causes of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Recognition of the problem of poverty has been enhanced, as also has realization of the need to address and resolve conflicts and disputes.

It is thus a defining moment in history. Right decisions can make a decisive difference. We could succeed in bringing about a structure of comprehensive and durable peace and security. We could effectively address and resolve long-festering conflicts and disputes. We should address the security concerns of all States, large and small. We could restrain the desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction. We could restrict the supply and proliferation of such weapons. And we could avoid policy decisions and actions that may revive a global arms race.

We have to note, nevertheless, that some recent developments have damaged the prospects of global disarmament. The impending demise of the ABM Treaty and plans for the development of strategic and theatre ballistic missile defence systems could erode stability at the global and regional levels. The prospects for the entry into force of the CTBT have become bleaker. Renewed nuclear testing and the development of so-called "usable" nuclear weapons could trigger a new nuclear arms race. The prospects of finalizing the BWC protocol also do not look bright in the wake of the breakdown of negotiations last December. And this Conference remains deadlocked on its work programme, pending negotiations on a fissile materials treaty, on nuclear disarmament and on steps to prevent an arms race in outer space.

These negative trends for strategic stability and disarmament could become much worse if existing policies designed to prevent the use of nuclear weapons are abandoned in favour of arbitrary and unidimensional approaches to security. Serious concerns have been provoked by the recent revelations of analyses and projections which, if translated into policies, would erode some of the fundamental premises of bilateral, regional and global disarmament and non-proliferation paradigms.

Although the powerful may be driven by unilateral impulses, they cannot escape multilateral imperatives. The world has changed radically over the last decade since the cold war. New power configurations are accompanied by new technologies and new security threats. Major Powers, although perhaps more unequal now in military capabilities, still possess the capability to inflict unacceptable damage and destruction on one another.

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

In any new paradigm of cooperative international security, the promotion of arms control and disarmament at the global and regional levels will continue to play a central role. An agreed and equitable political and legal framework is essential to ensure strategic stability in future. The United Nations remains the best instrument for the formulation and implementation of such a framework. And this Conference is the best instrument to promote the vitally necessary multilateral agreements for global and regional disarmament.

Pakistan is committed to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material treaty, which should be both a non-proliferation and disarmament treaty. The Conference on Disarmament should also open negotiations in ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Until agreement on the work programme is achieved, the Conference on Disarmament should be utilized to address certain other areas of importance for international security and disarmament, such as the issue of missiles in all its aspects and regional arms control.

In the emerging international security environment, missiles will clearly constitute a central element in the varying equations of offensive and defensive capabilities. With the demise of the ABM Treaty, some major Powers may rely on as yet uncertain ballistic missile defences while others may multiply their offensive systems to maintain the credibility of their deterrence. Missiles will also emerge as an important element of deterrence equations, particularly if advanced aircraft are either not available or are too expensive.

Partial approaches to containing the proliferation of missiles, as represented by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), discriminate against some countries, eroding their national security and working to the advantage of others which already possess missile capabilities and other delivery platforms.

It is essential, therefore, to address the missiles issue in a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and balanced manner, covering both non-proliferation and disarmament aspects. That would not exclude interim measures to address specific and urgent issues which may threaten regional and international peace and stability on the basis of mutual and equitable restraint.

The Conference on Disarmament is the most appropriate forum to address this complex issue. It has the mandate and the expertise to analyse the implications and negotiate a legally binding instrument. Only such an instrument emerging from the Conference on Disarmament can expect to enjoy universal acceptance. Accordingly, Pakistan has proposed that the Conference should consider the issue of missiles. We are encouraged by the generally positive responses to our proposal which we hope will lead to an early consensus on an adequate course of action.

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

The United Nations General Assembly annually adopts resolutions endorsing the pursuit of regional disarmament as a complement to international disarmament endeavours. The General Assembly has also called on the Conference on Disarmament to evolve principles for the realization of conventional arms control and disarmament at the regional and subregional levels.

The international community cannot ignore the reality that principal threats to international peace and security now emanate not from any continuing strategic confrontation between the major Powers but from regional conflicts and tensions. It is the compulsions generated by these situations that now motivate the continued build-up of conventional forces and weapons of mass destruction capabilities.

The best way to prevent the scourge of war is to follow the vision of the United Nations Charter. International disputes should be resolved peacefully and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. Special attention should focus on the probable flashpoints of conflict and confrontation - the Taiwan Straits, the Korean peninsula, the Middle East and South Asia.

Pakistan and India now possess destructive power that is awesome. Inherent in military conflict is the danger of escalation to the nuclear level. This is not a threat, but a statement of fact. A no-first-use proposal limited only to nuclear weapons may, in fact, enhance the temptation to use conventional force for aggression and erode the deterrence that obtains at present. The option to use force needs to be abandoned. Pakistan is ready to join India in a reciprocal binding commitment to renounce the use of force, both conventional and nuclear.

South Asia has been described as the most dangerous place in the world. This is an apt assessment, especially at this moment. India has deployed its massive forces, including ballistic missiles, in battle positions along our international border and the Line of Control in Kashmir. Resorting to the threat of use of force, India has made unilateral demands on Pakistan. Irresponsible statements have been made by political military spokesmen contemplating what they have termed a "limited war" against Pakistan.

While crude attempts at coercive diplomacy are obviously inadmissible - and Pakistan will protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity against any aggression or incursion - our Government has made reasonable proposals for dialogue on issues of mutual concern. We believe that progress can be made if, instead of making one-sided demands, India enters into a dialogue with Pakistan. Similarly, instead of making diversionary allegations about violations of the Line of Control, India should permit impartial monitoring and stop obstructing the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) from carrying out its mandate in Kashmir.

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

Everyone knows that a serious approach to defusing tension and normalizing relations between Pakistan and India requires a just settlement of the Kashmir question. The principle and the prescription for a peaceful settlement have been sanctified in resolutions of the Security Council. India has an obligation to carry out the resolutions and implement its own pledge to let the people of the State exercise their right of self-determination.

As a first step, it is essential for New Delhi to recognize that no possible benefit of its current brinkmanship can match the disastrous consequences of an apocalyptical war with Pakistan. Our President, Pervez Musharraf, has offered his hand of friendship to Prime Minister Vajpayee in Kathmandu and urged a return to the process of dialogue on which the two leaders had reached an understanding at Agra. Settlement of Jammu and Kashmir would pave the way for the normalization of relations between the two neighbours. The dialogue would encompass security and nuclear issues, terrorism and narcotics trafficking, as well as proposals for cooperation in economic, commercial and other fields.

Apart from its resort to repression and terror against the Kashmiri freedom movement, India's reckless build-up of conventional and strategic weapons betrays hegemonic aims. Over the past three years India has increased its military spending by 50 per cent. Ironically, many of those States which plead here for non-proliferation and disarmament are selling advanced weapons systems to India. A responsible approach should require these States to counsel and exercise restraint, rather than contribute to India's destabilizing arms build-up.

Pakistan does not want to be sucked into a debilitating arms race in South Asia. In fact, we have frozen our budget since 1999. Pakistan will, however, need to maintain the credibility of its deterrence posture. The growing imbalance in conventional military capability would have wider strategic implications. It could aggravate Pakistan's reliance on the nuclear dimensions of its deterrence posture. It could lower the nuclear threshold in a regional security environment that is already inflammable.

The situation demands determined efforts by influential States to prevent emergent instability and a possibly disastrous conflict.

In addition to urgent de-escalation to defuse the current tensions, the incipient trends toward insecurity and instability in South Asia need to be constrained on a durable basis. This can be achieved by constructing a new architecture for peace, arms control and cooperation in the region.

Based on the fundamental principles which have been approved by the United Nations, especially the principle of equal security for all States, Pakistan has proposed the creation of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia. Incorporating nuclear as well as conventional arms balance and a political mechanism for resolving bilateral conflicts, especially the core dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, the comprehensive proposal includes the following components:

(Mr. Sattar, Pakistan)

- Bilateral formalization of the declared moratoriums on further nuclear testing by India and Pakistan;

- Non-deployment of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles;

- Maintenance of nuclear weapons on de-alert status;

- Formalization of the understanding to provide prior adequate notification of flight tests of missiles;

- Acceptance of a moratorium on the acquisition and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems;

- Confidence-building measures to reduce the risk of use of nuclear weapons by miscalculation or accident;

- Discussion of respective nuclear security doctrines with a view to avoiding a regional nuclear arms race.

Pakistan remains prepared to explore these proposals in bilateral talks with India, or through the mediation of the United Nations or other major Powers. We are also ready to discuss the regional restraint measures within the Conference on Disarmament.

In the pursuit of effective security in our difficult regional environment, Pakistan has adopted responsible policies. We seek credible deterrence but at the lowest possible level. We have upgraded command and control structures and devised iron-clad measures and mechanisms to ensure the security of our nuclear assets and capabilities. A national command authority, chaired by the head of Government and including three federal ministers and chiefs of armed services, provides policy direction, oversees recommendations in regard to the deployment and employment of assets, and approves measures to ensure custodial safety and complete institutional control.

Finally, let me add that Pakistan has developed limited nuclear capabilities exclusively for self-defence. Pakistan remains committed to the principle of non-proliferation. We agree that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will be destabilizing for global, regional and national security. To that end, Pakistan has tightened its already effective export-control system and is prepared further to strengthen laws to provide assurances against proliferation.

At the global as well as regional levels, the quest for non-proliferation will be unsustainable unless it is accompanied by a matching commitment to the goal of disarmament, nuclear and conventional. It is this commitment which is in question today. This Conference has an indispensable role in reviving the commitment to disarmament and ensuring that it is universally embraced.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and to my country, and I now request your indulgence for a few moments while I escort our distinguished guest from the hall. I give the floor now to the Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Javad Zarif.

Mr. ZARIF (Islamic Republic of Iran): In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful:

Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me to be back at the Conference on Disarmament, to which my Government attaches great importance.

Let me, at the outset, congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you success in guiding the admittedly difficult task before us. My delegation has full confidence in your leadership and foresight and is sure that you will make every possible effort to steer the Conference back on track and restore to it the relevance and importance which it once, not too long ago, enjoyed. I assure you of our support and cooperation.

I also wish to extend my warmest felicitations to my good friend, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, on his appointment and wish him every success.

In the last few years we have witnessed drastic developments on the international scene, not necessarily all promising, in the field of international security and disarmament. The challenges have been formidable. Yet our resolve to face them has been less than desirable or truly collective.

The end of the cold war gave rise to hopes for a world free from super-Power rivalries, a world where confrontation would no longer be the order of the day and cooperation would prevail and a world where all States, through active participation in multilateral processes addressing the problems facing the prosperity and well-being of all nations, would devise rule-based regimes governing international relations in all spheres.

And we did in fact make undeniable progress in the field of disarmament. This Conference can take credit for much of that. In the early 1990s we succeeded in finalizing the Chemical Weapons Convention and establishing OPCW to organize international cooperation in our common cause against a horrible category of weapons of mass destruction.

In 1994, the BWC Special Conference mandated an open-ended ad hoc group to start negotiations on a protocol strengthening the implementation of the Convention, again, so that the world can feel more calm and safe from the scourge of another category of weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

In the 1990s, the Conference on Disarmament also engaged in negotiations for a comprehensive ban on all nuclear tests, as a first step toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Although the Conference on Disarmament could not agree on a final document, the CTBT, notwithstanding certain deficiencies and loopholes, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996.

In early 1995, the nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their pledge not to resort to the threat or use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. This pledge was noted by the Security Council in its resolution 984 (1995). A couple of weeks later, the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, taking note, inter alia, of this pledge, indefinitely extended the Treaty.

The 2000 NPT Review Conference was yet another success. The States parties to the Treaty were able, for the first time in fifteen years, to agree on a final document in which unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, the applicability of the principle of irreversibility to nuclear disarmament and the diminishing role of nuclear weapons in security posture were reaffirmed.

Not all went as well as hoped, however.

Following the end of negotiations on the CTBT, the Conference on Disarmament has failed to agree on a substantive programme of work. This is in fact the fifth consecutive year that we gather in this august body to discuss what to discuss, without any success.

The rejection of the CTBT by a major nuclear-weapon State has blown hopes for its rapid entry into force and there does not seem to be any room for optimism towards a change of policy from that side.

The results of more than six years of negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group on a protocol strengthening the implementation of the BWC have been vetoed and the validity of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group has been questioned. Furthermore, the BWC Fifth Review Conference has been suspended because of recourse to a unilateral approach to issues of concern to all members of the international community.

The unilateral withdrawal from the ABM Treaty coupled with the pursuit of gigantic military projects like the national missile defence system, have exacerbated international concerns about a more dangerous arms race and the militarization of outer space.

But that is still not all.

The publication of excerpts from a new would-be nuclear weapons doctrine has alarmed nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. While the document remains classified, official statements do not deny that action plans are being devised to develop a new generation of nuclear weapons and to improve the existing ones to be used against nuclear as well as non-nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The so-called "nuclear posture review" represents an alarming trend of contempt for multilateralism and threatens to undermine our common achievements, particularly in the area of non-proliferation.

We cannot seek, as I said in this Conference two years ago, to establish a civilized community of human beings and States without accepting the premise that all peoples and States have an equal right to survive and to guarantee peace and security for their citizens. Mass destructive weapons, by their very existence, undermine this basic principle as well as the most fundamental human rights and the very foundations of international humanitarian law. We should not accept that our children in the coming millennium should continue to live under the horrifying shadow of the possible use of these weapons. We must ensure that the peoples of Iran and Japan are the very last victims of weapons of mass destruction of any type at any time and under any pretext whatsoever.

At present, we feel that this very basic premise of the civilized world is under the attack of the "offensive strike leg" of the new nuclear posture.

As for Iran, let me underline once again and in no equivocal terms that we consider the development and use of weapons of mass destruction inhuman, immoral, illegal and against our very basic principles. They have no place in our defence doctrine. We do not have, nor do we seek, any such weapons, and most certainly we do not accept or tolerate allegations by those who have clearly placed themselves and their protégé outside the law.

Under the current volatile situation, where unacceptable unilateral approaches are even glorified, the United Nations disarmament machinery, and this Conference in particular, have a crucial role to play. This can be done, as suggested by the Group of 21, with an agenda of negotiations on nuclear disarmament, FMCT, PAROS and negative security assurances.

On nuclear weapons, the NPT and its review conferences provide us with sufficient input. Here the concern is more with compliance.

The emergence of the new nuclear weapons doctrine and its implications, constitute serious violations of the provisions of the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, on a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions, the principle of irreversibility and the diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies.

Such a doctrine would also constitute a grave violation of the positive and negative security assurances given by nuclear-weapon States in the early 1980s and reaffirmed in 1995, including in a Security Council resolution.

We believe that the lack of compliance with the commitments undertaken in accordance with NPT provisions and agreed upon during the NPT review conferences and those unilaterally pledged and reaffirmed would make the option for a treaty on negative security assurances a

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

viable one. The wealth of exploratory discussions within the Conference on Disarmament on this issue provides the necessary basis for strengthening the NPT regime through an international legally-binding instrument assuring non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

With regard to biological weapons, the results of more than a decade of arduous negotiations within the VEREX group of experts and the Ad Hoc Group are too valuable to be neglected and set aside, just because of a single player, however powerful. We believe that the only effective international mechanism to strengthen the BWC and combat new challenges, including bio-terrorism, is the finalization of the protocol through the completion of the work of the twenty-fourth session of the Ad Hoc Group.

Strict adherence to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group, as issued by the 1994 BWC Special Conference, would both ensure the total and effective ban of another category of weapons of mass destruction and leave no ground for baseless allegations of non-compliance which lack any verifiable justification.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is perhaps the only instrument dealing with weapons of mass destruction in which all necessary verification measures have been foreseen. Notwithstanding certain deficiencies concerning universal adherence to the Convention, OPCW has been successful in carrying out its task and continued full cooperation of all States parties is the prerequisite for its further success.

It is quite natural for all members of any international organization, including OPCW, to be concerned with the management of all aspects of the work of the organization, including financial management and allocation of resources. Such concerns should, however, be addressed through the appropriate mechanisms that have been envisaged, and not through arm-twisting or financially strangling the only legitimate mechanism for verification of compliance with the Convention.

With regard to missiles, the complexities associated with the issue of missiles are so enormous that no unilateral, self-serving approach could provide for a universal response which takes into account the interests and concerns of all. The results of the work of the panel of governmental experts and the report to be submitted to the General Assembly would provide us with a road map to deal with the issue. We therefore believe that every support should be rendered, through active participation in a truly deliberative process within the panel, in order to enable this first step - conducive to broad-based conclusions - to be adopted in the framework of the United Nations.

It is necessary to keep the issue of missiles, in all its aspects and addressed in a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and balanced manner, within the United Nations disarmament machinery, which provides the sole multilateral forum to address arms control and disarmament issues.

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

While the international community calls for multilateralism, cooperation and dialogue, one single voice talks about the escalation of war and unilateralism. The international community is poised at a defining moment. We need to decide about our individual and collective approaches. We had thought and hoped that all players had gained the maturity to understand that self-centred policies that are "quite simply pro" this or that country are indeed quite simply outdated. We need to build policies that are pro-humanity. It is not that simple, and admittedly not that popular with some powerful domestic constituencies, but it is most certainly the only way.

Three years ago, I stated before this august body:

> "As we enter a new millennium, we need to adopt a new perspective. We need to revisit old strategies and doctrines, which were founded on theoretically weak and historically unsound constructs. The challenge of the twenty-first century [...] is the mentality that believes any country whatsoever still needs nuclear weapons or can justify having them or claim that they are safe in their arsenal.
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> "Doctrines and policies of an arms race, block formations and exclusions have not brought our global community any real sense of security or peace. We need to rethink these very policies and reassess our fundamental assumptions, and I regret that this has yet to happen. Before a new round of rivalry and exclusion is entrenched, perpetuated and sanctified through the theories of clash and conflict between nations and civilizations, the international community must adopt the strategy of dialogue, tolerance and inclusion. The Conference on Disarmament's mission for the twenty-first century must centre on active pursuit of this imperative, breaking away from outdated perspectives, and beginning to look seriously at new paradigms such as global security networking."

Today, I can repeat the same statement with even more vigour and commitment. The tragic events of 11 September proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that we all have one fundamental commonality: our common vulnerability. The horror of that day illustrated that no country, however powerful, can be immune from the menaces that threaten the rest of the international community. It showed that global problems ranging from the environment to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction require global and not unilateral responses. Failure to grasp this reality would lead to simplistic and domestically appealing statements of policy such as some that have been made in this hall.

Let us have no doubt that, sooner or later, we will all come to the conclusion that we require a new global security paradigm founded on the principle that security is global and indivisible. We will save ourselves and all humankind a great deal of energy and agony by coming to terms, sooner rather than later, with the real need for inclusive, multilateral and rule-based security for all. For that we need to expand our horizons. We need to go beyond national self-interest to global common interest. The Conference on Disarmament has a crucial role to play in this endeavour and has the capacity to do so and thus lead.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Skotnikov.

Mr. SKOTNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success. You may count on our support. It is also a great pleasure for me to congratulate Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze on his appointment as the Secretary-General of our Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

The first part of the 2002 session of the Conference on Disarmament is coming to an end. As we look back, we can note some small movement in our work: the renewal of the mandate of the special coordinators on expansion of the membership of the Conference; on its approved and effective functioning; and on the review of its agenda. We hope that, this year, the members of the Conference will be able to agree on changes to the institutional and procedural mechanisms of our forum which will enable us to resolve substantive issues more rapidly and effectively.

Agreement remains to be reached on the key issue, the programme of work of the Conference of Disarmament. The Russian delegation stands ready to engage in a joint search for compromise solutions.

In a few days' time, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is due to commence in New York. It is our hope that a serious discussion will take place on the issues of the Treaty and the reasons analysed for foot-dragging in implementing the decisions taken by the previous Review Conference. Some of the issues to be discussed in New York are of direct relevance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The outcome of our efforts in Geneva will largely depend on what "baggage" delegations bring back from this first session of the Preparatory Committee. This applies, above all, to the prospects for beginning negotiations on the prohibition of the production of weapons-grade fissile material and for creating a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament. I already had occasion, in my January statement, to give assurances of the support from the Russian delegation for efforts to commence work in those directions.

The first session of the Preparatory Committee will take place in difficult circumstances. The problems in the area of strategic stability - following the decision by the United States to withdraw from the ABM Treaty - continue to worsen. We have been particularly disquieted by recent statements regarding the United States nuclear policy. Notwithstanding reassuring explanations in this regard, it seems that a transformation is taking place in that country in the approaches to the use of nuclear weapons and that there is, in particular, a recognition that these can be used in regional conflicts, including against non-nuclear weapon States. In our view, all of this - provided that it does reflect the actual situation - seriously weakens the basis of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

In connection with the forthcoming session of the Preparatory Committee, I would like to stress that the full range of issues relating to the NPT are among the top priorities for the Russian Federation. As a State party to the NPT and one of its depositaries, the Russian Federation considers that Treaty to be an important pillar in the system of international security. It is precisely the NPT which represents the main instrument serving to restrain the spread of nuclear weapons and, at the same time, promoting the development of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

For its part, Russia had worked consistently in fulfilment of its obligations under article 6 of the NPT. In so doing, we are proceeding both unilaterally and on a bilateral basis together with the United States. I would like to recall that the Russian Federation has ratified all treaties dealing with genuine nuclear disarmament, including START II and the CTBT. We are making concerted efforts to prevent the emergence of a vacuum in international law resulting from the United States decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty.

Several rounds of negotiations between experts of the Russian Federation and the United States have already been held. The most recent took place here in Geneva, on 21 and 22 March. Attention at these negotiations was mainly focused on discussing a bilateral agreement on subsequent cuts in strategic offensive weapons and a declaration on a new strategic relationship, which could be signed during the May visit of the United States President to Russia.

For the purpose of strengthening strategic stability, we have suggested to the five permanent members of the Security Council that expert consultations should be held on the issues of non-proliferation. It is in this format that, on many occasions in the past, we have been able to achieve significant results in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

I would now like to turn specifically to the problems faced by the Conference on Disarmament. In May 2001, the Russian delegation submitted a package proposal on the programme of work of the Conference, seeking to achieve agreement on the two outstanding issues, namely, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Before doing so, we had carefully studied all the proposals submitted by our partners since 1998, the last time that the programme of work had been adopted. Naturally, we paid special attention to the Amorim package, which enjoyed considerable support among delegations. We did not reject the Amorim ideas, but tried to develop them. Following consultations with the overwhelming majority of members of the Conference, the Russian delegation proposed, in document CD/1644, that two ad hoc committees should be established, one to consider the subject of nuclear disarmament and the other to negotiate a regime capable of preventing an arms race in outer space, which could take the form of a legally binding instrument.

We would like to stress that our agreement - for the first time during the entire period of Russia's participation in the Conference on Disarmament - to an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament was given after careful analysis of the situation, taking into account the views of

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

the majority of delegations and in accordance with the political commitments assumed by Russia under the decisions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. It is our understanding that the overwhelming majority of delegations support Russia's draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

In proposing our wording on PAROS; we also took into account the views of our partners on this issue. That is how we arrived at this particular option, which, in our view, does not run counter to the positions of any other delegations. We have taken as our precedent the experience gained from negotiating the mandate for the ad hoc committee on agenda item 4, relating to negative security assurances, which provided for negotiations "with a view to reaching agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These arrangements could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument". Notwithstanding differences in opinion regarding the prospects of elaborating a global agreement on negative security assurances, this text, as contained in document CD/1501, presented no difficulties and was adopted by consensus.

We have already had the opportunity to express our gratitude to all our partners who responded positively to our initiative. I would like to stress that the Russian delegation does not consider its wording to be cast in stone. Accordingly, before we officially submitted our proposals to the Conference on Disarmament, we acceded to the request of many delegations and substantially strengthened the language of the draft mandate for the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. As for the text on PAROS, this has remained unchanged since no specific proposals have been received in this regard. I would like today to reiterate our readiness to work together with all members of the Conference on the further refining of our proposals until a compromise is reached.

I would like to say a few more words on the subject of PAROS. Voices have been raised recently in these halls that the issue is supposedly "not yet ripe" for negotiation. We cannot agree with this position. We should like to cite several facts. For almost nine years, in the relevant ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament, intensive work has been under way in the major areas: examination and identification of problems related to PAROS; improvement of the current prevailing agreements relating to PAROS; and existing proposals and future initiatives on PAROS.

Discussions have focused on such issues as the status of outer space and its use exclusively for peaceful purposes; the need to prevent an arms race in outer space; identification of a possible danger to the functioning of space objects; interrelation between PAROS and arms limitation and disarmament; correlation of bilateral and multilateral efforts on PAROS; terminological aspects of outer space issues; the need to improve the corresponding legal regime for outer space, including verification measures; and confidence-building and predictability measures in outer space activities.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

In other words, much work has already been done. An enormous number of issues have been dealt with. We are now in a position to say that our predecessors have fundamentally prepared the issue for negotiations. Developments in recent years have only increased the urgency of resolving the issue of PAROS. It is precisely for that reason that we now consider it essential to take all possible measures to keep outer space peaceful and to deliver future generations of negotiators in this Conference from the need to tackle such tasks as the "de-weaponization" of outer space.

Let me make one thing perfectly clear: PAROS negotiations are, without any question, among Russia's priorities in the Conference on Disarmament. We submit for discussion by the Conference the initiatives of the Russian Federation which were set before the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivanov. We believe that the time has come to start the elaboration of comprehensive arrangements on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space, which, with regard to space objects, would reaffirm the principle of the non-use of force or threat of force in international relations. As a first step, agreement could be reached on a moratorium on the deployment of combat weapons in outer space, pending the conclusion of a relevant arrangement by the international community. We believe that, in our deliberations on PAROS, we could discuss the Chinese working paper entitled "Possible elements of the future international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space".

We support the consistent efforts of the members of the Group of 21 to promote the start of practical work in this area. Many other countries share our view of the danger of launching an arms race in outer space, as witness the recent statement to the Conference on Disarmament by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. A. Lindh. The joint action plan that was adopted during the recent official visit to Russia by the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Chrétien, in February 2002, stressed that both sides support the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We take a sympathetic view of the idea put forward recently by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, Mr. Graham, in his statement to the Conference, that an additional protocol be developed to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty to Prohibit the Deployment of Weapons in Outer Space. Finally, we note with satisfaction the statement made in February by the United States Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Javits, in which he concurred that the issue of PAROS was one of the priorities of the Conference. Thus, in our view, all that remains now is for us to translate words into deeds.

Today I would also like to review Russia's approach to the so-called non-controversial agenda items. The Russian Federation understands the legitimate aspirations of the non-nuclear weapon States parties to the NPT to be provided with assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We support the idea of re-establishing in the Conference an appropriate ad hoc committee with the same negotiating mandate as before, and we have no objection to the elaboration in the Conference of a global agreement on negative security assurances provided that this takes into account our fundamental reservations with regard to cases where nuclear weapons could be used in order to repel aggression.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

We would like to reaffirm our readiness to enlarge the range of countries covered by the already existing system of security assurances, by stepping up the process of creating non-nuclear weapon zones and by cementing the obligations of non-nuclear countries not to acquire, station or deploy nuclear weapons on their terrorities.

Under item 6 of our agenda "Comprehensive programme of disarmament", the Russi in Federation supports the pursuit by the international community of the goal of a total ban on anti-personnel mines. Evidence of this may be seen in our active stand during the preparations for and conduct of the Second Review Conference on these inhumane weapons. At the same time, we are convinced that the mine problem needs to be resolved in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the actual defence-related needs and economic capabilities of each State.

We view a total ban on anti-personnel landmines as a goal which should be pursued through a series of agreed time-bound phases. The first, as we see it, could be the elaboration in the Conference on Disarmament of a universal ban on the transfer of anti-personnel land mines. By halting the spread of such mines, we will be able substantially to limit their uncontrolled use. In this regard, we have a real opportunity to enlist the involvement in negotiations of key producers and users of anti-personnel land mines and to develop constructive cooperation between States parties to the Ottawa Convention and those countries that have not yet acceded to it.

Russia attaches great importance to the issue of transparency in armaments, recognizing its positive role in creating a climate of confidence among different countries. Transparency in armaments could serve as an important lever in preventing the destabilizing stockpiling of arms and averting armed conflicts. We believe, however, that this process - the destabilizing stockpiling of conventional arms - would be more effectively checked if the transparency came first of all from importers. Information on arms procurement is more sensitive to importers, in terms of their national security, than it is to exporters.

In our view, the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects yielded positive results. Russia is already taking practical steps to implement the programme of action adopted by that conference. We are convinced that, in the absence of concerted international action to prevent illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, it will be impossible to resolve conflicts, to guarantee security for populations and to ensure the economic development of entire regions. In our view, the Conference on Disarmament is the optimum forum for further discussions on the issues of small arms and light weapons. We believe, however, that the Conference should define its role and possible contribution in this area in such a way as to avoid duplicating work that has already been done.

Another new focus for the Conference on Disarmament could, in our view, be the topic of missile non-proliferation. The broad participation at the recent Paris meeting on the draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation demonstrated the urgency of this task and the determination of most States to participate in its solution on the basis of a

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

multilateral approach. We noted the proposals made in Paris that work on the international code of conduct could be continued in the Conference on Disarmament. We proceed from the assumption that agreement on the code, together with activities of the panel of governmental experts entrusted with assisting the United Nations Secretary-General in preparing a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects and Russia's initiative on establishing a global control system for the non-proliferation on missiles and missile technology, represents one of the important avenues by which non-proliferation can be ensured through political and diplomatic means.

In 2001, during the informal consultations on institutional and procedural issues in the Conference on Disarmament, the Russian delegation proposed that this question should be placed on the agenda of the Conference. We are happy to see that our ideas enjoy considerable support.

Mr. President, the problems of disarmament are, without any doubt, of a complicated nature and their solution will require all States to manifest determination, a sense of realism and a readiness to make compromises. We are convinced that, with your experience and leadership, you will be able to give added impetus to the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation for his statement, and I now give the floor to the next speaker, the distinguished representative of China, Ambassador Hu.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, may I begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our appreciation for the untiring efforts made by your predecessors, Mr. Fisscha Yimer and Mr. Mohamed Tawfik. We are also happy to see Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze take up his duties as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and we would like to extend our congratulations to him.

Today I would like to focus on two issues: prevention of an arms race in outer space and a fissile material cut-off treaty. Where outer space is concerned, we have seen the following developments during the 20 years since the Star Wars initiatives was first unveiled: considerable headway has been made in the sphere of outer space-related military and weapon technologies and weapons and weapons systems that in the past were mere blueprints are now being given real form. The ABM Treaty has been unilaterally rejected. The missile defence project currently being pushed forward in all its aspects has now quite openly incorporated outer-space weapons systems as one of its main components. Optimal use has been made of the relevant organizations and resources to ensure the swift and successful conclusion of this project.

In the meantime, certain operational concepts have been advanced in rapid succession, such as exercising control of space and asserting superiority in outer space, and both the theory of the perfect war in outer space and the command structures for such a war are now firmly in

(Mr. Hu, China)

place. About one year ago the first space war exercises were held, simulating the use of anti-satellite weapons, strategic missile defence systems and land-based laser weapons to attack space targets. Work is underway to set in place and further develop battle units for outer space. Parallel efforts are being conducted on the fashioning of missile defence systems and development of space weapons and plans to gain control of space have entered the implementation stage.

All these developments are evidence of the imminent danger of the weaponization of outer space, which will have among its consequences not only the possibility of an arms race in outer space but also serious damage to the international disarmament process and global strategic balance and stability. This runs directly counter to the benign aspiration of the international community to make peaceful use of outer space. For this reason, the task of preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space is one of particular urgency today. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament should face up to this reality and take effective action to meet this challenge.

Over the last 50 years humankind has lived through the process of research and development of nuclear weapons, their deployment and then their reduction . History has shown us how arduous a task it is to negotiate nuclear disarmament once these weapons have already been developed and deployed. Only by adopting urgent measures to prevent the weaponization of outer space, by nipping this peril in the bud, so to speak, will we be able to ensure that future generations of humankind are not confronted with the complex and intractable problem of disarming outer space and preventing the proliferation of weapons in outer space.

The events of September 11 demonstrate yet again that the dangers threatening the security of the international community are more diversified and global in nature, and marked by an increasing asymmetry. States are becoming ever more interdependent for their security. Any country, no matter how powerful, has to engage in and strengthen cooperation with others. Only in this way can States effectively meet their various security challenges and ensure their comprehensive and long-lasting peace and security.

Given the above considerations and concerns about the danger of a future "space Pearl Harbour", it has become ever more critical for all countries to strengthen their cooperation in their joint efforts to forestall this danger by concluding multilateral disarmament treaties that regulate the national behaviour of countries. Any attempt by countries to seek redress through military means, such as by developing outer space weapons, would run counter to the contemporary climate in favour of peace and development and would not be conducive to a fundamental settlement of the issue.

On numerous occasions I have heard statements by the representatives of many countries that the best way to strengthen international security is by establishing and strengthening the relevant multilateral legal regimes. It is apparent that, in a situation where the existing outer space legal instruments fall far short of meeting the new challenges, the only means of ensuring that the interests and assets of all States in outer space are safeguarded on an equal footing and

(Mr. Hu, China)

that valuable resources are channelled towards the peaceful use of outer space is by negotiating and concluding legally binding instruments to prohibit the weaponization of outer space and prevent an arms race in outer space. In this regard, the choice to be made by the major Powers with space weapons capabilities is undoubtedly of paramount importance.

At the General Assembly in 2001, the Russian Federation put forward a positive proposal calling for a moratorium on the deployment of weapons in outer space and the prohibition of the weaponization of outer space. China fully supports this proposal. We have always maintained that the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish an ad hoc committee on PAROS and commence negotiations with a view to concluding one or more legal instruments on the prohibition of the weaponization of outer space. In 1985 China submitted a working paper, contained in document CD/579, entitled "Basic position on the prevention of an arms race in outer space". In 2000 and 2001, China submitted two working papers entitled, respectively, "China's position on and suggestions for ways to address the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament" (CD/1606) and "Possible elements of the future international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space" (CD/1645).

In the past, the Conference on Disarmament had an ad hoc committee on PAROS for 10 years in a row and the many ideas, suggestions and proposals put forward by all sides over this period provide us with a rich store of material for the launching of substantive work in this field and a working basis for the negotiation and ultimate conclusion of the relevant legal instruments on this issue. As for the mandate of the ad hoc committee on PAROS, the Chinese delegation has already put forward its proposal, which is contained in document CD/1576. We also support the proposals on this issue by the Group of 21 and the delegation of the Russian Federation, which are contained in documents CD/1570 and CD/1644, respectively.

China has always supported the idea of negotiating and concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty and believes that the conclusion of such a treaty would be of great significance in promoting nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. As early as March 1999, the Chinese President Jiang Zemin, in his address to the Conference on Disarmament, appealed for negotiations to be conducted as soon as possible for the conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty and expressed his conviction that such a treaty, once concluded, would be yet another major achievement after the CTBT in the promotion of nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear proliferation.

Owing to the series of negative developments in the field of disarmament and arms control in recent years - developments with which we are all too familiar, it has not yet been possible to launch negotiations on FMCT. This is something that we are not happy to see. I would like once again to stress that China's position on FMCT has not changed: we still favour and look forward to the early start of negotiations on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament and intend to participate in the negotiation process as soon as agreement is reached on the Conference's programme of work.

(Mr. Hu, China)

In view of the current situation regarding international security and arms control, the Chinese delegation is of the opinion that the Conference's core issues, including PAROS, FMCT, nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances, should be accorded equal importance and dealt with in a balanced way. PAROS is just as important as fissile material cut-off, if not more important. Accordingly, there is no reason for the ad hoc committee on PAROS not to begin its substantive work with a view to reaching agreement on an international legal instrument on preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. The delegation of the Russian Federation has put forward a good proposal on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, which is contained in document CD/1644. We hope that the Conference is able to take this as the basis for commencing substantive work on the above issues at the earliest possible juncture.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of China for his statement.

Distinguished colleagues, the next speaker on my list is Ambassador Les Luck, who will soon be completing his duties as representative of his country to the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me to bid farewell to Ambassador Luck

You joined the Conference in March 1999, three years ago. During your tenure you have always presented the position of your Government with authority and diplomatic talent. Your vast knowledge of arms control and disarmament was particularly appreciated by all of us when you presided over the Conference during the final weeks of its 1999 session. As President you led the Conference successfully through the difficult process of drafting its report to the General Assembly. Your intensive consultations, as well as the subsequent imaginative and impartial analysis of the work, laid strong foundations for further development of the programme of work. Your diplomatic skills have also been recognized in other disarmament forums in Geneva. In the BWC Ad Hoc Group you performed your duties as friend of the chair on legal issues with distinction and diplomatic talent. Your exemplary performance in the function of the President of the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and your perseverance in pursuing new challenges in the area of humanitarian law culminated in the successful conclusion of the Review Conference last December, thereby establishing a solid basis for the elaboration of new protocols to the Convention.

I am very happy give you the floor and, as the current President, I would most particularly like to hear your advice on how to continue our business when we come back after the six-week break. Ambassador Luck, you have the floor.

Mr. LUCK (Australia): That is indeed a challenge, but I do thank you for your kind remarks reflecting on the period of my three years here. As you said, I will shortly complete my appointment here, both in Geneva and to this Conference, and I have taken the floor just to make some brief remarks, as has been the custom with departing colleagues. But first let me say how pleased I am to see you presiding over this Conference. You were the first colleague that I met in this current assignment when you visited Canberra shortly before I came, and it has been a pleasure working with you.

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

Normally such occasions are a moment for reflection on particular developments, aspirations or achievements. This is not an easy task in the context of the Conference on Disarmament, for reasons that are familiar to us all.

Having arrived in Geneva after the "false dawn" of late 1998, when people started to think that we might be getting down to substantive work, I find myself among the first ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament - including my good friend and colleague, Seiichiro Noboru, Ambassador of Japan - to be leaving their post with no first-hand experience of the Conference conducting formal, substantive work on matters before it.

It is a matter of regret that, collectively, we have missed opportunities to engage purposefully and at a truly substantive level in the security, arms control and disarmament challenges before us.

I was reminded only yesterday that, when I was President of the Conference in the latter part of 1999, I observed that the Conference on Disarmament is: "the sum of its parts - of the policies, perspectives and political will of its constituent States". This was an expression of the sentiment often voiced among us that our dilemma is our collective responsibility, and that there is no point in apportioning blame. That is so. But equally, I believe it important to be mindful of the fact that the situation we find ourselves in has been contrived; it has been arrived at wilfully. The deadlock could be relaxed - just as wilfully.

I believe that this will already exists across almost the entire membership of the Conference on Disarmament; and that those countries would willingly embark on substantive work, much along the lines set out in CD/1624 - the Amorim proposal. While not perfect, this for most - including Australia - is self-evidently the best prescription for starting work. That the consensus rule is invoked to prevent us from doing so is difficult to accept.

The situation in the Conference on Disarmament reminds me of an experience I had many years ago as a child. I had been given a pocket knife; nothing at all as potent as the Swiss Army knives that we see around, something quite small. Nonetheless, the first thing that happened was that my father blunted the blade on a stone to "save me", as a small kid, from its dangers. I am pleased to say that knife never did cut my finger. But the reality is that it never made much of an impression on anything else either.

To come back to our Conference, I sometimes think that there is a patrician reflex at work here; seeking to save us from ourselves. Can it be that we are misguided in wanting to get on with negotiating subjects, such as FMCT, which we agree are ready for negotiation, while at the same time exploring in a serious way other relevant subjects and issues? Are we not capable of doing so? To those whose fatherly worries put a brake on our endeavours here, my advice is: relax. Let the Conference take its own course, confident that it will find a way of addressing each of the main issues with insight and sensitivity.

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

No country's fundamental interests will be placed in jeopardy by the Conference simply agreeing to address the main subjects before us in the manner which finds most acceptance among its members, which is that described in document CD/1624. Each delegation will have ample opportunity to protect and advance its interests once real work begins.

In this vein, Mr. President, I hope that your own energetic and imaginative efforts will help all delegations come to see things in this light. It really is essentially a question of deciding, wilfully, that the Conference can be trusted to get on with its business without prejudice to the concerns and priorities of any delegation. I wish you every success.

For its part, Australia acknowledges the long-standing consensus on the FMCT negotiating priority as the next step to be taken by this body. FMCT will be a useful - indeed essential - step in support of nuclear disarmament on the simple logic that negotiations about reductions require confidence that there is no fresh production of fissile material for weapons purposes. The sooner such negotiations start - and cooperative verification arrangements are put in place - the better.

And what of the other priority issues? It is true that different countries have different priorities. It is also true that the non-FMCT issues have failed to command a similar degree of collective priority. But are we not missing real opportunities by not addressing PAROS and nuclear disarmament concerns in this chamber - even if that falls short of negotiation?

Let the dialogue deepen and grow - and in the case of FMCT, let us start negotiating. That will bring real benefits - not least in proving that we are still capable of engaging constructively, and on the basis of consensus, in the pursuit of security and disarmament objectives.

Australia has a number of international security priorities which are addressed by our delegation here, if not always in the Conference on Disarmament itself. I need not rehearse those here, having done so in my statement earlier this session.

It remains for me to bid friends and colleagues farewell and wish them every success in their future endeavours here. I have genuinely appreciated the friendship and camaraderie of this forum - and of you all - as we have tried to contribute constructively. I am especially grateful to those who collaborated with me and my delegation in achieving strengthening of the CCW regime at the Second Review Conference late last year. I look forward to hearing of good progress in the further work which is planned this year.

This is not a time for naming names. But among those I will miss is our friend and colleague Clive Pearson, the former New Zealand Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament. Illness prevented Ambassador Pearson from making his own farewell statement in this forum, and I know he would have liked to have done so. As we approach the resumed NPT review cycle we are reminded of the invaluable contribution which Clive Pearson and his

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

able colleague, Ambassador Joan Mosley, then based in Vienna, made to the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Friends will be pleased to know that Clive was well and truly in recovery mode when I saw him last week, a few days before his return to New Zealand. I am also glad to have had the opportunity to know his successor, Ambassador Tim Caughley, and wish him every success.

As always I am appreciative of the work of the secretariat, of Vladimir Petrovsky, who served as Secretary-General of the Conference for nine years until recently, of his deputy Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, and of other members of the secretariat for their valuable support. I wish the new Secretary-General, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, well during his term.

I will miss this place for what might have been. I will miss the old jokes about the curtains, opened or closed, darkness or light. But mostly my wife Jenny and I will miss our friends and colleagues here.

For the present, then, I say thank you and farewell to you all.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Luck for his very thoughtful statement and very kind words addressed to the Chair, and on behalf of the Conference and myself, I should like to wish him and his family all the best in his career and personal life.

I now come to address the second ambassador who intends to leave us, Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru of Japan. He has been with us in the Conference on Disarmament only for two years, but he has served here with remarkable authority, which has earned him well-deserved recognition. We all remember his commitment to overcoming the stalemate of the Conference and we are still looking forward to his solution. We also applaud his multifarious efforts aimed at launching negotiations on the prohibition of fissile material. We all owe him a debt of gratitude for organizing and sponsoring a number of seminars and workshops, not only here but also in his capital city, facilitating the achievement of this goal and also for providing us with prompt and detailed information on disarmament-related activities organized by his Government. He also made an important contribution to the BWC Ad Hoc Group as friend of the chair on the seat of the future organization. He discharged his duties with a high degree of professionalism, with unwavering dedication and with unique diplomatic talent. I would like to recall his commendable interest in and support for the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship and Training Programme, the programme which for years has been boosting the expertise of young diplomats in the field of arms limitation, so that they could continue our common efforts, and I think that it is very fitting that you have your colleagues in the hall to listen to your statement today.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru.

Mr. NOBORU (Japan): Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, since this is the first time that I have taken the floor during your tenure, Mr. President, one of my most admired colleagues here in Geneva, let me first offer you my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Although currently facing one of its most difficult challenges, I trust that the Conference will be able to engage in most meaningful deliberations under your effective guidance, and I assure you of the full support of my delegation.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, a talented diplomat with enormous experience, on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference. I am most confident that the Conference will receive even more valuable and indispensable support from the secretariat under his leadership.

And Mr. President, I would also like to convey my personal appreciation for the extremely kind and warm words which you have addressed to me.

I must confess that it never occurred to me that I would have to make a farewell statement at such an early stage. My departure from the post of Disarmament Ambassador, which I have valued so much, might seem unduly precipitate, with the first meeting of the NPT Preparatory Committee just 10 days away. This departure, however, does not represent the waning of my Government's interest in disarmament or its frustration over the current stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you that this is only a routine change to be followed soon by the appointment of a brilliant successor.

Since I made a general statement just six weeks ago, I do not have anything much to add regarding the current situation in the Conference on Disarmament. I would just like to say that today we could be celebrating our 900th meeting of the Conference if the situation were different. Unfortunately, we have nothing to celebrate. I am reminded today of the first plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament that I attended exactly two years ago. It was the 847th meeting and, like today, was the last meeting for the first part of the 2000 session. Since then 54 meetings have been held, and still the Conference has neither agreed on a programme of work nor has it engaged in negotiations or substantive discussions. I recall that the shortest meeting which I attended lasted a mere three minutes. This stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament has indeed been frustrating and regrettable for all of us here, but I do not think that it has been just a waste of time. Rather, I see it as an inevitable process which the Conference must go through before arriving at a significant agreement. It could be likened to birth pangs. I am certain that the Japanese proverb which goes: "A child born of a difficult delivery grows well" will also prove, in the end, to be true of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the same time, however, I firmly believe that this painstaking process cannot, and should not, be sustained too long. The entire international community is calling insistently for progress in multilateral disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament has been waiting over the past years for a sound international security environment to be created, but neither has this

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

perseverance produced any tangible results, nor has it offered any rosy prospects. I therefore firmly believe that it is time for the Conference to be more proactive. We all know very well what our differences are with respect to the wording of certain mandates and, in my view, those differences are not so great. I am convinced that, with some more initiatives and ideas, we must be able to reach agreement to commence work in this forum.

We are all fully capable of working out solutions. Again, it is high time for each and every one of us to strengthen our determination and solidarity in order to bridge the prevailing differences among us. I would like to call upon all delegates to extend maximum assistance and cooperation to our President, so that he can lead the Conference to an agreement on his ingenious initiatives.

Since the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in the United States, there is increasing international interest in advancing disarmament by multilateral means. Threats to international peace and security appear to be growing more rapidly than expected. The Conference on Disarmament can do many things to deal with such threats, once it agrees on a programme of work. On the other hand, if the Conference remains in its stalemate, I am afraid that the fabric of international security based on the NPT regime will further unravel. In order to contribute to urgent global needs more effectively, I believe political attention ought to be focused more keenly on the Conference on Disarmament. One possible way of achieving this could be to hold regular ministerial meetings which would provide the work of the Conference on Disarmament with political incentive and dynamism. The first such meeting could be scheduled for early next year. This would certainly enable the Conference to play a more active role in contributing to world peace and security.

Mr. President, colleagues and friends, I would like to thank you very much for the great assistance, encouragement and intellectual input that has been extended to me during my stay in Geneva. Above all, I am most grateful for all the friendships that I have been able to develop here.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my special gratitude to Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Zaleski, and all the other staff of the secretariat for the invaluable professional assistance that they have extended to me and my delegation. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to all the interpreters for their dedication and efficiency.

(continued in French)

Allow me also to thank you all for your kindness and cooperation. It is a sad moment for me to have to take my leave of you and I shall remember always the extremely cordial atmosphere that prevails in the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, Mr. President, may I express my sincere hope that you are able to find in the very near future the sort of compromise that will enable substantive and productive work to commence as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Japan, Ambassador Noboru, for his statement, and on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I wish him and his family all success and happiness in future assignments.

Ladies and gentlemen, this brings the list of speakers to an end. Is there anyone who would like to take the floor at this juncture? I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of India.

Mr. SOOD (India): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I have had the opportunity to take the floor during your tenure as President of the Conference, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in the performance of the responsibilities that you carry. I would also like to take the floor to congratulate Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, our Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, on his appointment and to wish him luck in the responsibilities that he has been assigned.

I did not plan to ask for the floor or to make a statement today, but I have been obliged to do so largely in order to set the record straight with regard to some of the actually inaccurate and erroneous statements that we have heard this morning. I think it is important to recall here that India has been and remains the initiator of dialogue with Pakistan. It was those efforts at bilateral dialogue that have led to various agreements which now do not find mention in many Pakistani statements. And here I refer to the 1972 Simla Agreement, the resumption of talks at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in 1990 on security and confidence-building measures, the eight-point composite dialogue process that began in 1998, the Lahore Declaration and the memorandum of understanding on confidence-building measures that was signed in 1999. I mention these merely to drive home the fact that dialogue with Pakistan has always been a sustained policy for India, not merely dialogue for the sake of dialogue but dialogue as a means of resolving outstanding issues, and this includes the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, which finds mention in these initiatives, be it the Simla Agreement or the Lahore Declaration or the eight-point composite dialogue process.

But pursuit of dialogue, pursuit of meaningful dialogue, shall I say, requires dedication and trust, and trust is not built if dialogue is accompanied by the active sponsorship of cross-border terrorism to change the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir. Trust is not built by engaging in dialogue in spring and committing aggression in summer, as we saw in 1999, when, three months after the historic Lahore visit, we were surprised by the invasion in Kargil.

We understand that, in recent months, the Government in Pakistan has had to make very difficult choices. We are encouraged by some of the recent statements that have been made by General Musharraf, the President of Pakistan, and in particular the speech that he delivered on 12 January 2002. One thing it does is make it clear that the Government of Pakistan understands the extent of the problem and the challenges that it faces and the implications of these problems and challenges for Pakistan's own internal security. The presence of about 10 million illicit small arms and light weapons and their widespread use and the linkage

(Mr. Sood, India)

between small arms proliferation and narcotics are issues with which, I am certain, any Government would find it difficult to deal, and certainly the Government of Pakistan in its statements has shown its concern about these issues.

The fact that President Musharraf in his speeches recently has spoken about the need to regulate the 10,000-12,000 madrassas in Pakistan, the fact that he has spoken about the requirement that madrassas will not be permitted to provide weapons training, the fact that the foreign students - about 50,000 of them - must obtain permission from the countries to which they belong and that the 700,000 Pakistani students in these madrassas will now be given secular training, including on computers and in sciences, etc. - I believe that all these are very positive steps and difficult steps. Seven organizations have been banned, one of which - the Jaish-e-Mohammed - claimed responsibility for an attack on the Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly on 1 October 2001, and another - the Lashkar-e-Toiba - claimed responsibility for the attack on 13 December on the Indian Parliament. We understood that about 2,000 people have been detained but, according to what we now understand, about 1,300 have already been released, and nobody has as yet been charged.

These are, as I see it, some of the difficult choices that the Government of Pakistan is dealing with at this stage and, for this reason, we have said that, in order to pursue dialogue with the seriousness and purposefulness that it merits and deserves, we would like to see some evidence of Pakistan's commitment in the same direction. We would like to see Pakistan either show some movement in terms of handing over certain well-known terrorists that have been in Pakistan, and a list has been provided with their details. And we have also said that we would like to see some evidence of a cessation of cross-border infiltration, which will serve as a real demonstration of Pakistan's commitment and help move the dialogue forward.

I would just like to add that, insofar as the deployment of Indian forces is concerned, if we do get a commitment from the Government of Pakistan on these two benchmarks, then the Government of India will certainly be willing to move forward the dialogue and de-escalation steps. Otherwise, it is also important for the Government of India to maintain these forces with a view to ensuring an environment in which elections in Jammu and Kashmir - which are scheduled for the second half of this year - can be conducted in a peaceful environment if we do not have guarantees that terrorism or infiltration from across the border will not continue, as these activities will naturally have a negative impact on these elections.

Mr. President, let me therefore just reiterate that if we do receive positive signs from the Government of Pakistan that it is serious about being a member of the coalition in the war against terrorism, then we will certainly be in a position to respond positively and favourably and to commence dialogue in the hope that this will be purposeful and not end up in the kind of stalemate or impasse that we have seen in the past.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of India for his statement, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, it was not my intention either to take the floor. I think the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan has amply outlined Pakistan's policies with regard to disarmament and arms control and non-proliferation.

Before turning to the reason why I have asked to respond to my distinguished colleague from India, let me take this opportunity also to extend my felicitations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency and on the efforts that you are making to get the work of the Conference started. You can count on our support. I would also like to extend my felicitations to your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Yimer of Ethiopia, and to our colleague from Egypt. I would also like to extend a personal welcome to Secretary-General Sergei Ordzhonikidze on his assumption of his new post. We shall, I am sure, have occasion to cooperate very closely with him and will depend on his support.

I have listened to the farewell speeches of two of my distinguished colleagues, Ambassador Luck of Australia and Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru of Japan. I must tell them that they are the third representatives of both their countries to whom I have had to say farewell. Obviously, I have been here too long, but I assure you that I shall myself be making my farewell statement in the near future. I do not think, however, that the Conference on Disarmament has been wasting its time during their tenures. I believe that our discussions are important if only to express the frustrations and concerns of the vast majority of the member States of the international community about the threats to their security which they confront in the current global environment.

It was in that spirit of drawing attention to our concerns about the threat to Pakistan's security which impelled my Minister for Foreign Affairs to come here and to share these concerns with our colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to underline that in our region, as in any other region, the threat to security arises from both capabilities as well as intentions. In our region, we have a neighbour - India - which is a large country. It has nuclear weapons and has announced a nuclear doctrine which would envisage the acquisition of a triad of land, air and sea nuclear forces that, according to the draft nuclear doctrine, would constitute about 400 nuclear warheads at the very least, with a second-strike capability. India is developing missiles of a vast array: the Prithvi, the short-range missile, which they say is Pakistan-specific; the Agni, the short and medium-range missile; the Dhanush, the naval version of the Prithvi; the Sagarika submarine-launched ballistic missile; and the BrahMos, the supersonic cruise missile, which is being developed jointly with Russia; it is also on the point of acquiring the Phalcon early-warning system, and development of the Surya ICBM is continuing.

In the conventional field, India's plans are to acquire advanced arms to the tune of 100 billion dollars over the next 15 years. This is according to Indian news reports. This includes an aircraft carrier, 11 submarines, a large number of front-line aircraft from various sources - in addition to the present land forces, which it has, namely, 3,500 tanks, new artillery acquired recently, again from various sources, helicopter gunships, etc. About three fourths of the total Indian armed forces of over 1 million men are deployed against Pakistan. And these had been deployed against Pakistan much before the incident which India claims to be the casus belli for moving its troops into battle positions.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

Today, India has moved its missiles, the Prithvi and the Agni, according to the Indian Defence Minister, into battle-ready positions. Pakistan, on the contrary, has not done so, although we would be quite within our rights to do so. President Musharraf has declared that we will keep our nuclear weapons unweaponized and not co-located with delivery systems. This was a public statement. We have not seen a matching statement from India. Indian leaders speak, on the contrary, about the feasibility of a limited war against Pakistan.

I would like to take this opportunity once again to underline the dangers of such a doctrine, the dangers of such a mistaken belief on the part of Indian leaders that they can go to war with Pakistan and keep it limited. Do not bet on it.

My colleague from India has spoken with an air of - do I perhaps recall that Ambassador Luck used the word "patronizing"? - about the problems of Pakistan. Like any other country, we have problems and we are honest enough to say that we have them, and our President goes before the nation to say that he intends to deal with these problems with a firm hand and to root out all the extremism and terrorism. But people who live in glasshouses ought not to cast stones.

I wonder if my distinguished colleague of India has read about the atrocities that were committed only a few weeks ago in the Indian state of Gujarat? These atrocities were committed by a party called the VHP, which is a member of the ruling coalition in New Delhi. These thugs brutalized innocent Muslim men, women and children, killing pregnant women in front of everybody, while Indian police watched, and even participated in some of these atrocities. Is the killing of these innocents not terrorism? What is the Government of India doing to punish these terrorists, who killed over 1,000 innocent Muslims in Gujarat last month? Why does it not move its army into Gujarat, instead of playing brinkmanship with Pakistan?

Mr. President, capabilities India has, but also intentions. The intentions have been writ large in the statements of Indian leaders over the past several months and years. Let us not forget that the BJP, and I now quote from The Economist of last week: "The BJP rode to power in the early 1990s on a tide of religious bigotry, exploiting the Ayodhya issue for electoral gain. One of its senior figures, L.K. Advani, made the Ram campaign" - i.e. the campaign to demolish the Babri Mosque and construct a Hindu temple on its site - "made the Ram campaign his own, and used to give speeches beneath a flag that showed India as a single saffron block - with pre-Partition boundaries and Pakistan swallowed up inside."

It is these people who are in power in Delhi today and whose armies are arrayed in battle positions against Pakistan. Nevertheless, we exercise self-restraint. But when India makes demands on Pakistan: "Hand over terrorists" - who defines "terrorists"? Why does India not punish its own terrorists first? Those who killed innocent Muslims in Gujarat, for instance? Those who killed 3,000 Muslims in Bombay in 1994? Who gives India the right to make demands on Pakistan, a sovereign State? We will punish our own terrorists. We will punish the terrorists we find, and we shall do so with justice - and not at the beck and call of New Delhi.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

I believe that what the world needs to do is to bring the leaders in New Delhi to exercise some measure of restraint. The day before yesterday they passed a law, known by its abbreviation POTO, that is designed to enable the Indian State to impose all manner of incarcerations and detentions on anybody at any time without any explanation. This fascist law epitomizes the attitude of the brutal regime that occupies the seat of power in New Delhi.

We are for peace. We want dialogue with India. But dialogue is not a favour that India will grant us. Dialogue is meant to promote mutual interests, to address mutual problems - and God knows, we have many of them. If India has a responsible attitude, it will respond positively to the hand of friendship extended by President Musharraf to Prime Minister Vajpayee in Kathmandu and join us in a dialogue. In that dialogue we can raise with each other whatever complaints, whatever issues, but blackmail cannot be the road to dialogue.

Finally, Mr. President, let me underline that the struggle in Kashmir is a legitimate struggle. It is a struggle for self-determination which has been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council in several resolutions. India is obliged to implement those resolutions, and we call upon India once again to live up to its obligations under the United Nations Charter to implement those resolutions. The Kashmiri struggle is not terrorism. The Kashmiri people have the right to defend themselves against the 700,000 Indian troops who occupy their land and who have killed 80,000 Kashmiri youth, young Kashmiris who lie buried in the graveyards of Kashmir. They were not cross-border terrorists. They were Kashmiris fighting for their freedom. We call on India to respect the wishes of the Kashmiri people, to respect the Security Council resolutions, and to join us in a dialogue to find a just solution to Kashmir. That is the road to peace and not blackmail. Pakistan will never submit to blackmail.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Pakistan for his statement. I do not see any more requests for the floor.

This first half of the Finnish presidency has been very intensive and, before we go into our break, allow me to make some closing remarks.

We were very pleased to see eminent ministers for foreign affairs addressing this forum at every plenary, and I consider this a fulfilment of the proposal just made by Ambassador Noboru - why not have ministerial meetings? But this is perhaps a preparatory stage for addressing that kind of initiative.

We are now going into a six-week break. I hope it can be fruitful, productive and provide us new vigour when we are back in Geneva and in the Conference on Disarmament. My team and I are very grateful for your support and encouragement for our endeavours since we took over the presidency last week. All 66 delegations count here. We appreciate your cooperation.

Our approach has been to focus on practical and specific questions in a most pragmatic and systematic way, not forgetting the rules of the game or your national positions. But my point is that only via concrete dialogue, concrete work, can we make a real contribution.

(The President)

For your information, you will find our practical ideas in the form of an informal paper in your pigeonholes. We promise that we will try to get it to you this afternoon. It is already afternoon - 12.22 p.m. So please look at them if you are interested. We hope that they are clear and self-explanatory. We have tried to indicate it very clearly in our consultations, and we hope that you do not find any surprises. We do expect you to consider them with professional care and in a constructive spirit, because they are meant to be food for thought for continuing our consultations when we come back.

I wish you all a rewarding recess and will see you here at the latest at our next plenary, with which we will commence the second part of our presidency on Thursday, 16 May 2002, at 10 a.m. in this room.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.